

CONVENTION ON WETLANDS (Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

51<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee

Gland, Switzerland, 23-27 November 2015

SC51-06

## Report of the Secretary General and the Secretariat

### Actions requested:

The Standing Committee is invited to:

- take note of the Secretary General's report, based on Resolution XII.4 paragraph 7.
- establish a system of reports, whose frequency is established by the Executive Team, from the Secretary General to the Executive Team, IUCN General Director and interested Standing Committee members and Observer Parties.

1. The Secretary General of the Convention on Wetlands has prepared this report in response to para 7.c of Resolution XII.4, which tasks the Standing Committee with "Developing and immediately implementing a system of reports – the first being sent by 15 September 2015, and whose frequency will be established by the Executive Team – from the Secretary General to the Executive Team, IUCN General Director and interested Standing Committee members and Observer Parties, containing information on the progress of work of the Secretariat with focus on the main priorities adopted by the COP, the Secretariats' travelling and meetings etc., as well as the status of the core and non-core budget, and including an overview of the staff and consultancy contracts".
2. The 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Conference of the Parties concluded with 16 Resolutions and a revised set of Rules of Procedure that were all approved by Parties. The Secretariat is preparing the proceedings of COP12 which will be posted by SC51.
3. Issues arising from COP12 Resolutions as well as from SC49 and SC50 are covered under different agenda items, and the role of the Secretariat is mapped against the activities derived from those Resolutions and decisions within the Work Plan for the 2016-2018 triennium (Document SC51-07).
4. In that context, the Secretary General has developed the Secretariat Work Plan for 2016 (Document SC51-08), based on the 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan, our ongoing responsibilities, historical duties, Standing Committee decisions, and duties mandated through COP12 Resolutions.
5. Issues on enhancing of communication and sharing of information, to strengthen transparency and facilitate the evolution of decisions, guidance and implementation of the Convention, will be tackled where possible under the CEPA Work Plan, in cooperation with Contracting Parties, IOPs and other stakeholders.
6. A Working Group has been set up to improve existing management instruments between IUCN, the Standing Committee and the Secretary General to facilitate that the Secretariat effectively serves the Contracting Parties in their activities and implementation through clear, effective and understandable rules and procedures as a follow up to Resolution XI.1 *Institutional hosting of*

*the Ramsar Secretariat* and SC decision 46-24<sup>1</sup>. The existing management instruments are annexed to SC51-Inf.Doc.02.

7. As for previous Conference of the Parties, a subgroup will be set up by SC51 to oversee the preparation of COP13 in 2018 by the host country and the Secretariat.
8. SC50 established the Resource Mobilization Working Group to guide the Secretariat, including in its fundraising to implement approved non-core budget activities in support of the Strategic Plan, including the STRP activities, the CEPA Work Plan, Ramsar Advisory Missions, and others.
9. SC50 set up a CEPA Working Group to guide the Secretariat in improving the Ramsar web site and related services and the Ramsar Sites Information Service.
10. A Diplomatic Note (Diplomatic Note 2015/4) has been transmitted to Parties to respond to the request from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to provide elements of advice, as appropriate, concerning the funding that may be referred to the Global Environment Facility through the CBD Conference of the Parties. The Secretary General will then transmit this advice in a timely manner to the Executive Secretary of the CBD.
11. A set of terms of reference has been prepared for SC51 consideration (Document SC51-17) for consultancy support for the development of a strategy that will outline the potential phased integration of Arabic or other UN languages into the work of the Convention.
12. The report on the status of the core and non-core budget with an overview of staff and consultancy contracts will be covered under the Finance agenda items.
13. The major travel for the Secretariat staff has been in preparation for, and attendance at COP12. The senior management and other secretariat staff have also been travelling in response to the demands of the 2015 Work Plan and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ramsar Strategic Plan. Full details of all the missions with dates and the outcomes of the missions are provided in Annex 1 to this document.

---

<sup>1</sup> Decision 46-24 “*progress the negotiations between the Ramsar Secretariat and IUCN on improving operations by establishing a small task force (with three members from each organisation) on administrative, financial and scientific and technical issues; recommended that that task force pursue these matters with the involvement of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee, the Chair of the Subgroup on Finance, and the Chair of the STRP*”

## **Annex 1**

### **Report on Secretariat Travel since January 2015**

**Secretary General, Christopher Briggs**

**1/2 – 8/2/2015                      Kampala, Uganda (with Senior Advisor for Africa and External Relations Officer)**

#### *Participation in World Wetlands Day Celebrations*

We joined the rest of the world to celebrate World Wetlands Day on 2 February from Uganda, at the Lutembe Bay Wetland, a Ramsar Site of International Importance.

#### *Meetings with the President of Uganda and others*

We met the President of Uganda, His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, to discuss the state of wetlands in Uganda and how the Ramsar Convention could support their restoration and wise use. We also met representatives of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and UNDP, and officials from the Ministry of Water and the Environment.

#### *Wetland site visits*

We visited Mabamba and Nakivubo swamp (a key wetland for Uganda's waste water treatment) where a potential NORAD funded project is being proposed to restore wetland functions.

#### *Inauguration of new RAMCEA offices*

On 5 February, the new offices of the Ramsar Center for Eastern Africa (RAMCEA) in Kampala were opened. Heavy press coverage and the promise from the President to raise the importance of wetlands in the East Africa Community were major highlights.

**19/2 – 24/2/2015                      United Kingdom**

#### *Cambridge (with STRP Support Officer)*

Met representatives of BirdLife International, IUCN Cambridge Office and UNEP-WCMC, to discuss cooperation on freshwater publications, wetlands indicators, SOWWS, and outreach to BirdLife partners. Participated, with the Chair of STRP and the STRP Support Officer, in the Cambridge University Symposium on Biodiversity, Sustainable Development and the Law. Gave the opening plenary address on Biodiversity Accords & Sustainable Development Goals; chaired a Specialist Panel on Legal Innovations & Trends for Sustainable Development; acted as keynote speaker at session on Biodiversity & Sustainable Resources Governance.

#### *London (with Head of Communications)*

Met representatives of DEFRA, the UK Administrative Authority (AA), to discuss COP participation, the current status of Ramsar Sites and various questions about Sites in the UK and Overseas Territories, and to update on the current activities of the Secretariat. We also presented the latest factsheets to DFID staff and discussed the potential for a Ramsar application to development funds looking at the role of water in poverty alleviation. Follow-up has led to an ongoing debate on support for wetlands issues.

Met painter Jeremy Houghton to discuss the concept of establishing a network of Wetlands Champions – leading cultural figures who could use their influence to raise wetlands awareness. Also discussed the possibility of using some of his prints as prizes for WWD 2015 and for Ramsar Award winners.

Met Martin Spray of WWT, to discuss the potential transition of WWT into an IOP, implications for the international and national roles of WWT and participation at COP12, and to explore areas for future collaboration.

**12/3 – 22/3/2015      Japan**

*UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction*

The SG represented Ramsar, and led discussions on the relevance of wetlands for DRR. He also:

- visited Kabukuri-numa and Hinuma Ramsar Sites (the latter with the Head of Communications and Ramsar photographer);
- met high-level officials from the AA (Ministry of Environment) and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs; Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism;
- met and worked on MOUs with JICA and the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA);
- met Keidanren (Japan Business Federation); and the Japan Railway Construction, Transport, Technology Agency (JRRT) regarding a new train line affecting a Ramsar Site.

**13/4 - 18/4/2015      Daegu, Rep. of Korea**

*Participation in the 7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum (with Deputy Secretary General and Head of Partnerships)*

Facilitated, led and addressed conference and various side events, made presentations and participated in discussions in several sessions. Met representatives of the AA, and the Ministry of Unification; discussed the hosting of the Ramsar Regional Center – East Asia.

**25/4 – 29/4/2015      Djakarta, Indonesia**

*Tropical Landscapes Summit: A Global Investment Opportunity*

Represented the Convention and spoke at a parallel plenary session on *The Case for Conservation and Biodiversity*. This was also an opportunity to meet various Ministers including the Minister of Environment, and representatives of The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, UNEP, UNDP, the CBD Secretariat, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, etc.

**5/5 – 6/5/2015      Paris, France**

*Meeting with the Ramsar AA (with Head of Communications)*

Discussed the current status of Ramsar in France and ongoing joint work, and worked through plans for the future, including preparations for Ramsar COP12, the role of France as co-lead of the Strategic Plan Subgroup, and preparations for UNFCCC COP21 and side events there.

Also met DANONE Sustainability Programme, to discuss initial outline for the BOK project; present Ramsar awards brochure, film and plan for COP12; discussed extended COP12 communications material, and Bernard Giraud and Laurent Sacchi attendance and Ramsar Award arrangements; and agreed COPIL meeting options and future MOU with Danone/Evian.

Met Nicolas Hulot, Special Envoy of the President for the Environment and President of the N. Hulot Foundation, to introduce Ramsar and present the case for promoting wetlands through his TV and general network; invited him to COP as well as the French Ambassador of the Environment.

Met SUEZ Environment following up on initial SG meeting to discuss potential areas for long term cooperation on communications and on ecosystem valuation of Suez large infrastructure projects.

**21/5 – 24/5/2015      Ballybay, Ireland**

*National Wetlands Conference of Eire*

Participated and gave keynote address. Participated in meeting of the Irish Ramsar Wetlands Committee and gained valuable insights into the non-attendance at COP12 and non-production of national reports for nine years. Met the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht to discuss possibilities for collaboration on new Wetlands Inventory of Eire and ways to increase participation of Irish experts in international meetings. Discussed sensitive issues about the use of peatlands in Eire for fuel and the restoration potential of worked peat beds.

**29/5 – 11/6/2015      Punta del Este, Uruguay**

*COP12 (with most Secretariat staff)*

16 Resolutions approved by COP including the new Strategic Plan with full support of the Parties, and revised Rules of Procedure. Excellent work by the Secretariat staff and despite difficulties a successful first COP for the SG and DSG.

**15/6 – 19/6/2015      Alderbrook and Portland, USA**

*Annual meeting of the Consultative Group on Biodiversity*

Participated in the annual meeting as a result of support of the US representative of Ramsar in the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Met representatives of most of the 70 major donors/foundations present, whose goal is to “support and grow a community of biodiversity grantmakers that pursues complementary and collaborative strategies”. Addressed the meeting on importance of wetlands, built up new contacts; follow up ongoing.

*Governor of Washington State*

Met Governor Jay Inslee, and engaged in discussions on wetlands and the increasing need for Washington State to maintain and restore wetlands to cope with decreased snowfall and increasing risk of drought

*The Nature Conservancy and private sector*

In Portland, met The Nature Conservancy and representatives of the private sector and held discussions with potential collaborators in various organizations including Wild Salmon Centre in USA and Russia.

**24/6 – 25/6/2015      Geneva, Switzerland**

*UNECE meeting at Palais des Nations*

Participated to make statement for Ramsar and to ensure our participation in UNECE issues and to work with Chair and Vice Chair on the presentation to be made in the upcoming meeting on the New York Convention in September.

**29/6 – 30/6/2015      Bonn, Germany**

*Annual meeting of the World Heritage Committee (WHC39) and visit to UNFCCC and UNCCD*

Attended for the first time this meeting of a key partner to make statement for Ramsar and to ensure that our partnership is well understood; gave a speech at a side event on the joint project being managed with the support of Jeju on multiply branded sites with WHC, MAB, GeoParks, and Ramsar.

**5/7 – 11/7/2015      Jeju, Republic of Korea**

*World Leaders' Conservation Forum 2015*

Met a rich range of organizations and was panellist in plenary session on “Nature: a path of peace and coexistence”. The invitation from self-governing Jeju province allowed time to visit the Ramsar Site and other key WHC sites. Discussed our collaboration with the Minister of Environment and his team in order to start preliminary discussions on a future potential MOU with Jeju, to include aspects of capacity building for wetland professionals. Also visited SamDaSoo, a major Korean water company based in Jeju, and discussed among other issues the process of water protection at watershed and groundwater levels. Also discussed with the Minister of Unification the planned meeting on wetlands in North Korea in October, which is being supported by UNESCAP and IUCN.

**Ania Grobicki, Deputy Secretary General**

**27/3/2015      London, UK**

*Meeting between the EU and the African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) group of countries*

Part of an ongoing process following the expiry of the Cotonou Agreement, with broad agreement that the post-Cotonou framework should deliver global public goods, designed to support international agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals and any future agreements on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

**11/4 – 19/4/2015      Daegu, South Korea**

*7<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum (with SG and Head of Partnerships)*

Represented Ramsar in various sessions, ensuring that Ramsar was part of the Ministerial process; made key-note presentation to the Ministerial Round Table on Water and Ecosystems; organized an informal closed session on the proposed Global Partnership on Wetland Restoration.

*Visit to Upo Wetland*

Visit to Upo Wetland and wetland education centre, and discussed the future of the Ramsar Regional Centre East Asia with its coordinator.

**19/4 – 25/4/2015      Samoa**

*Meeting with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)*

Met to strengthen the relationship and finalize the re-drafted MOU for 2016-2018 in the light of the new Ramsar 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Plan and SPREP strategy 2016-2020. Discussed selection of candidates for Regional Officer for Oceania. Followed up on Ramsar inclusion in potential Global Environment Facility (GEF) projects for which SPREP is an implementing agency. Promoted the accession of the remaining eight Pacific Island Countries which are members of SPREP but not yet Parties to Ramsar.

**25/4 – 30/4/2015      Jeju Island, South Korea**

*International workshop on sites with multiple designations*

Continued liaison with IUCN-Jeju project on harmonizing Internationally Designated Areas at site level. Initial discussions held with Jeju government on a long-term (5 year) MOU to be established, to include project funding.

*Assessment of Ramsar Site issues*

Report back on restoration measures taken at Dongbaekdongshan Ramsar Site; discussion of another possible new Ramsar Site to be designated.

**16/6 – 17/6/2015**      **Hamilton, Canada**

*Meeting of the International Advisory Committee of UNU-INWEH*

Attended as an invited member of the International Advisory Board. Informed Ramsar Secretariat colleagues of the mangrove work undertaken by UNU-INWEH. Ongoing contacts with UNU-INWEH take place through UN-Water.

**27/6 – 28/6/2015**      **Ede, the Netherlands**

*2015 Wetlands International board meeting*

Attended as an invited observer, on behalf of the Ramsar Secretariat. Contributed to the organizational development taking place in Wetlands International, and discussed with WI staff possible joint UNFCCC COP21 side events on peatlands and eco-DRR, and outcomes of Ramsar COP12.

**Paul Ouedraogo, Senior Advisor, Africa**

**31/1 – 10/2/2015**      **Uganda and Rwanda**

*Uganda (with the SG, see his report above)*

*Rwanda*

Lobbied for the updates of Rugezi Ramsar Site and prepared the designation of four wetlands as Ramsar Sites: Lake Ruweru, Akagera National Park, Kamiranzovu Marshland and Bugesera Basin.

Trained the National Focal Point (NFP) and a colleague on the online RSIS system. Also advised the DG of the Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA) on the need to have a better biodiversity programme with wetlands as focus. Negotiated to host a RAMCEA meeting in Rwanda.

**16/3 – 25/3/2015**      **Alexandria, Egypt**

*Senghor University*

Delivered several training modules on wetlands and protected areas management. Coached 20 students on the preparation of their theses, and was a panellist for 16 graduate students defending their master's thesis on African wetlands.

**20/4 – 22/4/2015**      **Frascati, Italy**

*Evaluation of tenders for GlobWetland Africa project*

DHI and Jena-Optronik were selected as providers to the project.

**27/4 – 08/5/2015**      **Burkina Faso**

*Training of site managers on African wetlands local governance*

Delivered the following training modules:

- Introduction to the Ramsar Convention

- Challenges and opportunities of wetlands in Africa
- Wetlands inventory
- Management of Ramsar Sites and other wetlands

**22/6 – 23/6/2015      Darmstadt, Germany**

*Launch of ESA's Sentinel 2A satellite*

Attended the ESA launch event with the Globwetland Africa Project partners to advocate for the importance of wetlands conservation and restoration. On 27 July 2015 ESA will demonstrate the first results to the media, and use wetlands to show the importance of Sentinel 2 to environmental monitoring.

The project partners will be developing a free-access toolbox to help Ramsar Contracting Parties (initially in Africa) monitor the state of wetlands and their capacity to support biodiversity and provide ecosystem services. The partnership may lead to the development of a draft resolution on wetlands and desertification for COP13.

**29/6 – 2/7/2015      Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire**

*Climate change COP21 side event on climate-agriculture-forest*

This side event to the International Scientific Conference "Our Common Future under Climate Change", which precedes UNFCCC COP21, highlighted the benefits of appropriate mitigation and adaptation policies and programmes on agriculture and forestry. Addressed plenary on sustainable agriculture practices which respect forests and wetlands, and chaired the panel discussions on the importance and vulnerability of wetlands. I also took the opportunity to train Ramsar Site managers.

**Maria Rivera, Senior Advisor, Americas**

**12/1 – 16/1/2015      Nicaragua**

*Ramsar Advisory Mission on the Nicaragua Interoceanic Canal*

The Mission, requested by the Government of Nicaragua, gave the opportunity to discuss with high-level government officials the status of the project, and to visit the project area and the San Miguelito Ramsar Site. A mission report with recommendations will be prepared once the Secretariat receives the EIA study from the Government.

**23/2 – 26/2/2015      Costa Rica**

*Regional Workshop "Wetlands for our future. Join us!"*

The Secretariat organized the workshop jointly with JICA, the AA in Costa Rica, the Vice-ministry of Water, Seas, Coasts and Wetlands, and the National System of Conservation Areas. It celebrated World Wetlands Day, increased the visibility of the Convention among the Mesoamerican countries and regional stakeholders, and strengthened the collaboration between the Secretariat and JICA. Participants planned two side events for COP12, one to share best practices of the Mesoamerican countries in the implementation of the Convention, and the other to present the workshop results.

**16/3 – 23/3/2015      Uruguay**

*COP12 planning (with Administrative & Communications Assistant and COP12 Logistics Officer)*

Discussed with the government and the appointed logistics company and travel agency the status of organization of COP12 based on the signed MOU. It was clear that preparations were progressing well and that the government was very committed to the organization and the success of COP12.

**Tobias Salathe, Senior Advisor, Europe**

**25/3 – 27/3/2015      Bonn, Germany**

*Workshop for German-speaking Ramsar countries*

Presented Ramsar priorities to stakeholders in German-speaking Parties (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, and Luxembourg), prepared them for COP12, presented the new RSIS, and encouraged them to set up a small communications group to produce a Ramsar newsletter in German.

**4/5 –8/5/2015      Istanbul, Turkey**

*BlackSeaWet regional initiative meeting*

Maintained contact with BlackSeaWet and contributed to the work of its governance body, providing advice and support on the development of future activities, projects and fundraising. A rough project concept was developed, comprising many different activities which might appeal to diverse donors. Agreed to consult further during COP12, and that two main avenues for funding need to be explored by eligible countries: EU (Romania, Bulgaria) and GEF (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova). It was agreed that concrete progress is needed before the end of 2015.

**22/6 – 25/6/2015      Tbilisi, Georgia**

*GEF expanded constituency workshop (with Head of Partnerships)*

Learned about the functioning of GEF and explored opportunities for helping Ramsar NFPs to submit wetland-related project concepts to GEF in eligible countries. Explored potential GEF support for the BlackSeaWet regional initiative's programme, with the AAs from Moldova and Georgia. The Moldovan and Romanian AAs subsequently took steps to develop the BlackSeaWet proposal as agreed at the May meeting. Identified other Regional Initiatives which might be suitable for possible GEF support; establishment of a Central Asian initiative is ongoing.

Visited the AA and discussed current Ramsar implementation matters (Article 3.2 files, new Ramsar Sites, updating of RSIS, national programmes and transboundary cooperation).

**29/6 – 30/6/2015      Arles, France**

*MedWet regional initiative management board meeting*

This meeting evaluated the outcomes of the MedWet activities at COP12, progress with the MedWet communications plan, and cooperation with the Mediterranean Wetland Observatory (developing and monitoring wetland indicators). The analysis of National Reports to COP12 of MedWet countries will be distributed more widely. A formal MedWet Committee meeting (MedWet/Com12) needs to be planned for early 2016 in Paris; this will be the opportunity to clarify post-2016 financing and priority projects to respond to the targets listed in the "MedWet framework for action 2016-2030".

**1/7 – 3/7/2015 Norway**

*Ramsar Advisory Mission to Nordre Tyrifjord area (with the Deputy Secretary General)*

A RAM was requested to look into the planned road and railway that are supposed to cross the Storelva river floodplain which flows into the northern part of Tyrifjord, and to provide advice on the best option and general Ramsar principles on the construction of transport infrastructure. The final report with recommendations will be published on the Ramsar web site by early September.

**Lew Young, Senior Advisor, Asia-Oceania**

**13/1– 22/1/2015      Japan**

*Meeting with JICA (Tokyo)*

Discussed with JICA the draft MoC that will be signed between Ramsar and JICA, and the JICA side-event at COP12 about their work on wetlands (at which the MoC would be signed).

*East Asian Australasian Flyway Partnership 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Parties (Kushiro)*

Showed the Secretariat's support for this regional initiative; met the Ramsar NFP and partners from the flyway to hear updates about their work and discussed how the Secretariat can support them.

**16/2/– 22/2/2015      Kolkata, India**

*Workshop on the “Conservation of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of Wetlands in Relation to Global Change”*

The workshop was organized by Prof. Brij Gopal, one of the foremost wetland ecologists in India and a long-time supporter of Ramsar.

- Discussed the conservation of the East Kolkata Wetland Ramsar Site which is threatened by urban encroachment;
- re-established contact with the AA in Delhi;
- met a representative of the GIZ office in India; and
- visited the Chilika Lake Ramsar Site which is a model for wetland restoration and working with local communities.

**28/2/– 5/3/2015      Tehran, I.R. Iran**

*Collaborative Management Board meeting of the RRC-CWA*

The Director used this CMB meeting to re-energize the Ramsar Regional Centre – Central and West Asia, by reviewing the hosting of the Centre by the DOE, the TORs of the Board, the budget for the Centre as well as the staffing, work plan and the CEPA activities, particularly the web site. Also discussed future cooperation with the UNDP office in Tehran, and visited the Anzali Ramsar Site to meet JICA staff and learn about their project to restore the Site.

**16/3 – 22/3/2015      Colombo, Sri Lanka**

*GEF Expanded Constituency Workshop for South and South East Asia*

Gained a better understanding of how the GEF process works, met the GEF Focal Points and discussed possibilities of developing GEF wetland projects in the coming years. Also led a training workshop for Sri Lankan Ramsar Site managers on using the new online RSIS.

**4/4 – 10/4/2015      Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic**

*Pre-COP12 meeting for Central Asia*

As the Ramsar AAs in Central Asia have difficulties with Ramsar's working languages, a separate pre-COP12 meeting was held for them with simultaneous interpreting between English and Russian. The Ramsar Assistant for Asia who speaks Russian helped make the meeting a success. The participants engaged enthusiastically and began to discuss the establishment of a Ramsar Regional Initiative for Central Asia. The Asia Team in the Secretariat is assisting them with this now.

**20/4 – 22/4/2015      Cambridge, UK**

*Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool for Ramsar (R-METT)*

This meeting held at UNEP-WCMC brought together a small group of academics, consultants and other experts who were instrumental in developing the R-METT for use at Ramsar Sites (Resolution XII.15). Participants reviewed the use of the METT and collected feedback on the R-METT prior to COP12. Met the staff at UNEP-WCMC who are managing the METT database.

**11/5 – 14/5/2015      Bangkok, Thailand**

*Workshop on Global Resilience Partnership project*

The IUCN-Asia Regional Office has been developing a GRP project entitled "Increasing resilience in the Ramsar Sites of the Lower Mekong Basin" involving Ramsar NFPs and the Secretariat. Workshop participants developed the Phase 2 proposal for the project. Also met the coordinator of the University Network for Wetland Ecology and Conservation Training in the Mekong Region, discussed with representatives of WWF Thailand their projects on new Ramsar Site designation in the country, and discussed the development of the Indo-Burma Ramsar Regional Initiative (IBRRI).

**Chris Perceval, Head of Partnerships**

**25 /2 – 26 /2/2015      Paris, France**

*Implementation Roadmap Workshop (World Water Forum event)*

The main output was a clearer knowledge of how to co-ordinate Theme 3.2 of the World Water Forum in Korea. Guidance was provided on: running sessions, logistics, developing an implementation roadmap, working across themes, sessions and issues to ensure a coherent and action-oriented Forum.

**17/3 – 20/3/2015      Rome, Italy**

*European Space Agency event (Mapping water bodies from space)*

Intelligence gathering and partnership development. GlobWetlands has received multi-million Euro support from the EU, with strong partnership with ESA. Presented some earth observation products that could be developed to enhance the RSIS (UNEP-GRID helped develop the presentation).

**10/4 – 18/4/2015      Daegu, Rep. of Korea**

*7th World Water Forum (with SG and DSG)*

Strengthened engagement with a wide variety of organizations to raise the profile of the Convention and advance implementation of the Ramsar Strategic Plan. Particular emphasis was given to: a) addressing drivers of wetlands loss; b) identifying locations for prioritizing action; and c) supporting development of specific plans, as part of the "implementation roadmap", the major output of the event.

**20/4 – 22/4/2015**      **Geneva, Switzerland**

*UN Group on Earth Observation, aquatic ecosystems event*

Represented Ramsar following invitation to Prof. Roy Gardner who was not available. Explained the work that the Ramsar Convention has been carrying out through partnerships with UNEP-GRID, ESA, JAXA, Jena-Optronics and UNEP-WCMC.

**13/5 – 15/5/2015**      **Geneva**

*UNEP-convened MEA Synergies Meeting (with the Standing Committee Vice-Chair)*

Provided feedback and input to an “options paper” on strengthening synergies to be considered by UNEP Executive Director. Provided a summary of some of the activities that Ramsar is undertaking to enhance and support synergies. Strengthened specific engagement with other MEA secretariats.

**21/6 – 25/6/2015**      **Tbilisi, Georgia**

*GEF Extended Constituency Workshops for Eastern European Countries*

Gained a deeper knowledge of the GEF and what support might be useful to Parties in accessing GEF funds. Initiated a discussion with Secretariat colleagues on how the GEF might be useful in providing funds for Ramsar Regional Initiatives.

**Camilla Chalmers, Head of Communications**

**4/2 – 5/2/2015**      **Paris, France**

*Launch of new Livelihoods Fund*

Attended opening ceremony of the new Livelihoods Fund with a podium position next to the DG of IUCN and the key private sector supporters. Presented Ramsar to Victoria Mars (Chairman of Mars) who was there to sign up to Livelihoods. Discussed activities with key contacts within Danone, including ways to increase Livelihoods communications outreach.

**12/3 – 20/3/2015**      **Japan**

Visited Danone Ecole de l’eau to mark the completion of the project and sign off the last project report in order to release funds. Will work with Danone to plan Phase 2 of the project, and inform wetland education within the Evian Water Institute and elsewhere.

Visited Japanese Ramsar Sites including Hinuma Nature Park, a new Site to be designated at COP12, to arrange photographs and press materials in advance. With the SG, met Tokyo region mayors and ministers to increase Ramsar Outreach. Discussed work plans with national CEPA representatives.

**11/5 – 12/5/2015**      **London, UK**

*Private sector outreach*

Presented Ramsar and the role of wetlands to Virgin Unite and Cazenove Bank (Sustainable Investment and CSR departments) with a view to generating funding and partnerships. **Virgin Unite** builds alliances and initiatives such as the Elders, the Carbon War Room, and The B Team. It has demonstrated an interest in wetlands e.g. helping advance coastal and marine conservation through the Caribbean Challenge Initiative, and also runs Ocean Unite. **Cazenove** has a strong focus on

integrating social, environmental and ethical considerations into the mainstream investment process.

**18/6/2015**                      **Paris, France**

*Book of Knowledge, Danone*

Briefing on a new Danone / Ramsar project for a 25-page publication, hopefully to be written by Ramsar expert Max Finlayson alongside a selection of authors, reviewed by the STRP Chair, and launched at the first of the round tables for key opinion leaders that Danone are holding in the three month period running up to UNFCCC COP21. This will position Ramsar as a leading expert in the wetlands and climate debate, and cement the relationship with Danone going into a new negotiation of the MOU.

**Royal Gardner, Chair of STRP**

**12/1 – 17/1/2015**              **Bonn, Germany**

*Third plenary meeting of IPBES*

Represented the Convention at IPBES-3. Participation was particularly useful in view of the discussion on land degradation and restoration assessment, and the inclusion freshwater ecosystems. A closing statement by the MEAs present noted the connection between land degradation and wetlands and cited the UNCCD-Ramsar statement on land degradation neutrality. A meeting between the IPBES Secretariat and representatives of the biodiversity-related conventions also took place and discussed timing of the global assessment, maximizing regional assessment processes, consultation of the Convention Secretariats' in the scoping process, strategic partnerships with the Conventions, and the role of Conventions at IPBES-4, and finally the infrastructure for a "matchmaking facility" under IPBES, to be used by the Conventions.

**30/5 – 11/6/2015**              **Punta del Este, Uruguay**

*COP12*

Gave the STRP Chair's report during plenary, coordinated COP-related STRP activities, and provided advice (especially with respect to DR XII.5) when requested. I also participated in five side events:

- *Implementation of the Ramsar-JICA Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC): Past, Present and Future* (moderator), sponsored by JICA;
- *State of the World's Wetlands and their Services to People* (moderator and panellist), sponsored by the STRP;
- *Sustainable Use of Wetlands and Water: International Water Treaties and their Contributions to Implementing Sustainable Development Goals* (panellist), sponsored by CISDL;
- *Wetlands and Agriculture* (panellist), sponsored by the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic; and
- *Unveiling the implementation tool box: IOPs' support tools and methodologies to achieve objectives of the Ramsar Convention* (moderator), sponsored by BirdLife International and IUCN.